



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

EXHIBITION

'Turn, Turn, Turn: Lathe-Turned Works by Kentucky Artisans'

March 7 – Sept. 12, 2015

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BEREA, Ky. – A new exhibit, "Turn, Turn, Turn: Lathe-Turned Works by Kentucky Artisans," opens March 7 at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea. This exhibit on display through Sept. 12 showcases works by 20 Kentucky artisans who have created an array of both functional and decorative works using the lathe.

The lathe is a tool that has been used over the centuries to shape wood, stone and metal into a variety of shapes and forms. The modern lathe is a motorized machine that has become extremely useful and popular with craftspeople and designers.

The lathe holds and rotates a material on an axis, allowing the material to be shaped by sharp tools that cut away the material until the desired shape remains. Many of the works in this exhibit are turned from wood and Kentucky has a strong wood-turning tradition with wood-turning groups located in Louisville (Louisville Area Woodturners) and in Lexington (Bluegrass Area Woodturners).

A number of the woodturners are from the Berea area, where the late Rude Osolnik taught woodturning at Berea College and introduced woodturning techniques such as natural edge turning. The exhibit includes work by Joe Osolnik, who learned woodturning at his father's side and created a classic "Twig Pot" and a set of three candlesticks for this exhibit.

Natural-edge turning changes the turning axis to allow the bark of the tree to remain as the finished edge. Paul Ferrell used this technique to turn a slender-stemmed chalice, while Virgil Gary Maiden and Michael Doran used the natural-edge technique to create their asymmetrical natural-edge bowls.

The dramatic, high-footed hollow vessels by Jack Fifield are sculptural. Using unusual woods he carves details into his lids; a small carved bear completes the work "Bear Contemplation." Drama and Native American symbolism can be seen in John Keeton's work, "Drums of War and Scars of Battle," with its coiled basketry pattern, small inlaid drum heads and thunderbird imagery.

Woodturners have a great love for the colors and grain patterns in wood, and Jamie Donaldson shows this clearly in his piece made from an Australian red mallee burl. He has turned only the central reddish-colored portion into a smooth hollow, allowing the rest of the burl to retain its natural shape and color.

Wood colors and grain patterns are shown in numerous works. Alan Oakley's turned flasks showcase the unusual pattern and color of ambrosia maple; Richard Adams shows dramatic color in his bowl "Cherry Sunset;" Larry Blair turns a bowl from English yew; Henry McKeown

joins a variety of woods together in “Patchwork Chemistry;” Alan Mills cuts and laminates several woods together to turn “Landscape Plate” and Robert Bagley contrasts ambrosia maple with dyed and sculpted cherry wood.

Additions of color and pattern to a turned wooden shape are made with Czechoslovakian glass seed beads, stitched over a hollow form by Linda Fifield. Robert Henrickson has designed patterns by turning spindle shapes from a variety of contrasting woods and arranging them to create beautiful star and snowflake imagery.

“While doing my graduate studies at a museum, I encountered window lattice screens from palaces of the 15th to 18th centuries,” Henrickson said. “They were striking in their intricacy, yet simple in their components. They drew me to explore their construction and my interest in woodturning was born!”

The lathe can also be used to shape stone. Ron Cooper turns alabaster into vessels that showcase the material’s natural beauty. Cooper recently began laminating different colored stone together to form intentional patterns. His work in the exhibit titled “Five Line Zig-Zag Jar” uses 309 pieces of natural colored Utah alabaster that are cut, sanded, glued into layers and then turned with a lathe to form a Southwest-inspired jar.

Metal can also be shaped on the lathe, and Mark Needham uses the lathe to turn aluminum into bezels and bails for his citrine and ametrine necklaces. Needham turned and assembled the components of each necklace, even turning finials from aluminum to create wall-mounted display hangers for them.

“I work in aircraft-grade aluminum, which is resistant to oxidation and tarnishing,” he said. “This allows me to design intricate settings that don’t require polishing.”

Asymmetrical and whimsical works in this exhibit include a wooden golf putter by Bruce Lange, a turned baseball pedestal by Truman Fields and three ornaments constructed from unusual colored woods by Thomas R. Williams.

“I recently realized that I could create asymmetrical pieces on the lathe by moving the work from one axis to another – repositioning between centers,” Williams said. “I tend to concentrate on the smaller range of turned items when doing this.”

Artists with work in the exhibit include: Richard Adams, London; Robert Bagley, Berea; Larry Blair, Berea; Ron Cooper, Mount Vernon; Jamie Donaldson, Georgetown; Michael Doran, Lexington; Paul Ferrell, Crofton; Truman Fields, Berea; Jack Fifield, McKee; Linda Fifield, McKee; Robert Henrickson, Lexington; John Keeton, Winchester; Bruce Lange, Crestwood; Virgil Gary Maiden, Putney; Henry McKeown, Crab Orchard; Alan Mills, Berea; Mark Needham, Louisville; Alan Oakley, Paint Lick; Joe Osolnik, Berea; and Thomas R. Williams, Paris.

“Turn, Turn, Turn: Lathe-Turned Works by Kentucky Artisans” will be on display March 7 through Sept. 12, 2015, at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea. A meet-the-artist reception will be held Sunday, March 15, from 1:30-3 p.m.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea Exit 77. The center’s exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily, year-round, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.

The center currently features works by more than 700 artisans from more than 100 counties across the Commonwealth. A lobby exhibit, “Kentucky Murals by Frank W. Long” is on display through April 18. For more information about the center’s events call 859-985-5448, visit the center’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/kentucky.artisan.center, or go to the center’s website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Photos top row, left to right: “Bear Contemplation” by Jack Fifield; “Citrine Necklace” by Mark Needham; “Drums of War and Scars of Battle” by John Keeton; “Flask: Blighted Maple” by Alan Oakley

Photos bottom row, left to right: “Red Mallee Burl Bowl” by Jamie Donaldson; “Twin Stars” by Robert Henrickson; “Ornament: Cherry and Yellowheart” by Thomas R. Williams; “Maple Root Burl Bowl” by Robert Bagley